

NH State Rehabilitation Council



Annual Report

December 31, 2014



New Hampshire Vocational Rehabilitation

New Hampshire Department of Education
800-299-1647 / www.education.nh.gov/career/vocational

NH Vocational Rehabilitation
21 South Fruit Street, Suite 20
Concord, NH 03301

Director

Lisa K. Hatz

Our Mission

To assist eligible New Hampshire citizens with disabilities to
Secure suitable employment and financial and personal
Independence by providing rehabilitation services.

Our Vision

NH Vocational Rehabilitation seeks to become an organization committed to
fulfilling the needs of customers by providing continuously improving quality
services through an effort of teamwork and professionalism.

Table of Contents

Message from SRC Chair	3
Message from NHVR Director	4
SRC Mission, Purpose & Vision	5
SRC Responsibilities	6
SRC Members	7
SRC Committees	8
SCR Activities and Recommendations	9 - 10
VR Program Highlights and Customer Satisfaction	11-14
Customer Satisfaction	15
Partnerships	17
Customer Success	18
SRC Comments and Recommendations	19 –23
Contact Information	24



The New Hampshire State Rehabilitation Council (SRC) is pleased to submit its Annual Report. In 2014, the SRC continued its pursuit of collaborative, meaningful partnerships with disability-focused organizations, in order to advocate for the needs of individuals with disabilities in New Hampshire.

The attached report is a compendium of the SRC's activities over the course of Federal Fiscal Year 2014. The SRC at each of its meetings continued to focus on the success of a VR Customer and Counselor.

Once again, in FY 2014, the SRC in collaboration with the Statewide Independent Living Council (SILC) held a Joint Meeting of the SRC and SILC which was focused on VR's role in the New Hampshire Care Management System which was created as a way to reform the Medicaid System in NH. As a result of this Joint Meeting, the SRC created a new Task Force on the Implementation of Care Management. This Task Force is charged with developing new relationships with the two organizations selected by the State to provide services to Medicaid eligible individuals, and to continue its partnership with the Department of Health and Human Services.

The SRC, after the enactment of the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act, on July 22, 2014, is participating in webinars sponsored by the U.S. Department of Labor, and the U.S. Department of Education on the provisions of the Act that directly impact the Vocational Rehabilitation Program. In addition, the Agency has invited the SRC to participate in the development and revision of Agency Policy. The SRC will meet twice annually, in addition to its quarterly meetings, to review and comment on Policy changes and additions.

The SRC continued in FY 2014 to seek out partnerships with other disability related organizations. I believe you will see that the NH SRC has been diligently working to move its agenda forward in a time of continued fiscal challenges.

I strongly believe that the work done in FY 2014 has assisted the SRC in providing continued and increased substantive and proactive support of the State Vocational Rehabilitation Agency.

Sincerely,

The Honorable Mariellen J. MacKay, SRC Chair



I would like to take this opportunity to thank our incredibly engaged and informed State Rehabilitation Council for their support, action and guidance provided to the agency in 2014. It was a year of twists and turns with the negotiations and enactment of the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA). All members provided great input, support and advocacy during that process and we are so grateful. You

assisted in the VR program nationally staying connected to our Special Education partners federally. This will be so important moving forward with implementing the law and how it will impact on our transitioning youth participants.

The New Hampshire Vocational Rehabilitation agency staff has been equally as busy for many reasons. They have been assisting other NHVR offices in covering open caseloads and putting customer service first! Thank you to our amazing staff for their dedication to the individuals with disabilities and our business partners.

The staff of the agency have many changes ahead in the coming year that were discussed with the SRC members at the joint "all staff" on 10/1/14. The agency has procured a new case management system and training will occur in the spring of 2015 to highlight how it will assist the Counselors in doing their work more efficiently. We have WIOA and new requirements that will change the way we do business in many respects and the SRC has been a valuable partner in learning what will be new and how the staff can be supported in the change. We also have many new and talented staff that have come on board to learn how to be great Vocational Rehabilitation Counselor's. The SRC has been able to meet them in various ways which really helps everyone stay connected.

Thank you, again, to our SRC members. You have been so important to us in the past and with all the changes happening to our agency you will be critical partners in the years to come.

Sincerely,

Lisa K. Hatz

Lisa K. Hatz, MA, CRC

State VR Director

Field Service Administrator

NH State Rehabilitation Council (SRC)

Purpose

Providing Leadership on Behalf of Persons with Disabilities and Guidance to Vocational Rehabilitation Programs

Mission

New Hampshire State Rehabilitation Council, through action and advocacy, partners with New Hampshire Vocational Rehabilitation (NHVR) to strengthen the agency's operation and effectiveness in the delivery of quality and timely services to individuals with disabilities, as they prepare for and engage in employment and careers.

Vision

By collaborating with key disability related organizations and building strong partnerships with Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) and employers' groups, the State Rehabilitation Council (SRC) provides leadership and advocacy that increases the number of qualified individuals with disabilities who strive to realize their goals of becoming successfully employed. The SRC maintains and widely publicizes the success of this ongoing relationship. This is evidenced by Congressional and State legislative recognition of the cost-effective benefits of the VR program, as they provide consistent financial support for NHVR services.

NH State Rehabilitation Council (SRC)

The SRC's responsibilities include:

- Reviewing, analyzing and advising in strategic partnership with NHVR services regarding the performance on the VR agency relating to eligibility, including Order of Selection, extent, scope, and effectiveness of VR services and functions that affect an individual's ability to obtain employment.
- Working in partnership with the state VR program, the SRC develops and reviews state goals established by the VR program, evaluates the effectiveness of the programs and services of the VR agency, and conducts needs assessments every three years.
- Providing advice to the VR agency on activities geared towards maximizing the delivery of services for the employment of NH citizens with disabilities
- Preparing and submitting an annual report to the Governor of New Hampshire and the Commissioner of the Federal Rehabilitation Service Administration on the status of the New Hampshire VR agency
- Assisting with the preparation of the VR agency annual State Plan updates, reports, needs assessments, and required evaluations
- Reviewing and analyzing the effectiveness and consumer satisfaction of the VR agency. This is assessed annually through the Customer Satisfaction Survey
- Coordinating working relationships and activities with other New Hampshire Councils.

NH State Rehabilitation Council (SRC)

Ann Ackerman Nashua Higher Education/Formal Customer	Don Powers Gilsum Business
Peter Darling Concord Business/Provider	Robert Purcell Merrimack Business
David Dwyer Concord Business/Provider	John Richards, 2 nd Vice Chair Peterborough Advocate
Jack Gibson North Sutton Advocate	Lorrie Ripley CAP
Lorna Greer Whitefield Business	Nancy Rollins Goodwill
Lisa Hatz, Ex-Officio VR Director	Charles Saia Governor's Commission on Disability
Jay Jean Dover Former Customer	Denise Sleeper Gilford Department of Health and Human Services
Michelle Lapointe, Ex-officio VR Counselor	David Smith Seacoast Mental Health Center
Mariellen MacKay, Chair Nashua Business/Provider	Mary Steady Northfield
Charlene Mayo, 1 st Vice Chair Concord Parent Information Center	Santina Thibedeau State Director of Special Education
David Ouellette NH Council on Developmental Disabilities	Susan Wolf-Downes Concord Business/Provider
Dorine Pelletier, 3 rd Vice Chair Greenfield Business/Provider/Formal Customer	Stephen Yerardi Peterborough SILC Representative/Formal Customer
	Janet Zeller Concord US Forest Service/Formal Customer

NH State Rehabilitation Council (SRC)

Advocacy/ Outreach and Marketing

Advocate for NHVR to the State Legislature and the Congressional Delegation. Develop SRC advocacy guideline and internal coordination structure. Develop data to show cost/benefit of the VR program. Develop NHVR success stories. Monitor the committee's strategic plan accomplishment. Increase the public's knowledge of NHVR through an SRC outreach program. Develop a SRC Speakers Bureau, deliver presentation sharing NHVR success stories. Provide SRC input into the customer satisfaction survey and customer needs assessment survey.

Collaboration (Internal and External)

Strengthen collaboration with other organizations whose missions are similar to NHVR. Develop SRC collaboration guidelines and internal coordination structure. Outreach to organizations whose missions are compatible with that of NHVR and are therefore a partner in servicing individuals with disabilities. Maintain relationships with partner organizations. Provide in-service training for SRC members. Develop candidates for SRC membership.

Policy

Participate in and review the development of VR policies. Monitor Order of Selection and review policy manual regulations.

State Plan

Participate in, review and monitor the development of the State Plan and monitor the multi-agency State Plan.

NH State Rehabilitation Council (SRC)

Recap of the SRC's Year – Highlights

October 2013

- SRC Chair participated in the Annual NH Employment Leadership Awards. It was a wonderful event and provides an opportunity to recognize outstanding employers who hire individuals with disabilities. Encourage SRC Members to attend the October 16, 2014 event which will be held at the Currier Museum of Art, Manchester.
- NHVR contributed to the successful employment of 1,162 individuals in FY 13. NHVR passed the Federal VR Standards and Indicators.
- SRC conveyed its position to the Governor's Office relative to the need for CAP to remain designated to the Governor's Commission on Disability.

November 2013

- SRC Members attended and participated in November 5 NHVR All staff meeting at which SRC presented certificate of appreciation to the staff for their hard work in FY13.

December 2013

- Joint Meeting of the SRC and the Statewide Independent Living Council. It was extremely successful in spite of inclement weather. Continued to build on the foundation of SRC/SILC collaboration. The Meeting was to provide information and education on the changes to NH Medicaid System to a Care Management System. HHS Commissioner Nicholas Toumpas, and the Director of the Bureau of Developmental Services Matthew Ertas addressed the joint meeting, as did the Commissioner of the NH Department of Education,
- Presentation on Comprehensive Statewide Needs Assessment – Ella McAllister

NH State Rehabilitation Council (SRC)

January 2014

- Presentation on Medicaid Care Management and Transportation- Mary Ann Cooney

SRC congratulated Lisa for being chosen as one of 2014 NH 40 under 40

April 2014

- Presentation by Lorene Reagan, Director of Bureau of Developmental Disabilities
- Participated in the National Coalition of State Rehabilitation Councils Spring Conference, and continued in the leadership of NCSRC Steering Committee. SRC Chair attended the Council of State Administrators of Vocational Rehabilitation Spring Conference.
- Loss of SILC Chair, Jerry Grantham

June 2014

- SRC held its annual election of Officers for FY 2015
 - The Honorable Mariellen MacKay, Chair
 - Charlene Mayo, 1st Vice Chair
 - John Richards, 2nd Vice Chair
 - Dorine Pelletier 3rd Vice Chair

NH Vocational Rehabilitation FY 2014 in Review October 1, 2013 – September 30, 2014

Vocational Rehabilitation is a joint State/Federal program that assists eligible individuals with disabilities to become contributing members of their community. To this end, New Hampshire Vocational Rehabilitation supports the following programs and priorities

- Rehabilitation Services
- Services to the Blind and Visually Impaired
- Independent Living
- Disability Determination Services
- Transition School-to-Work
- Supported Employment

Working with People with Disabilities.....

*During Federal Fiscal Year 2014, NH
Vocational Rehabilitation*

- Helped **1,049 individuals** with disabilities gain employment
- The average hourly wage was **\$13.78**
- Total earnings of these employees in the first year was **\$21,053,912**
- The average hours worked per week was **28**
- The average weekly salary was **\$386**
- The average annual salary was **\$20,072**

Federal and state taxes paid by these employees
(estimated): **\$4,421,321**

NH Vocational Rehabilitation FY 2014 in Review October 1, 2013 – September 30, 2014

People with disabilities can work and take advantage of the opportunities available to the citizens of New Hampshire. Yet they face barriers unique to their situation, barriers that prevent them from achieving their goals. Vocational Rehabilitation assists persons with disabilities to achieve their employment goals through the provision of services to address those barriers.

Who Are Our Customers

During Federal Fiscal Year 2014, NH Vocational Rehabilitation....

- Worked with 8,464 eligible clients
- Received 2,717 new applicants

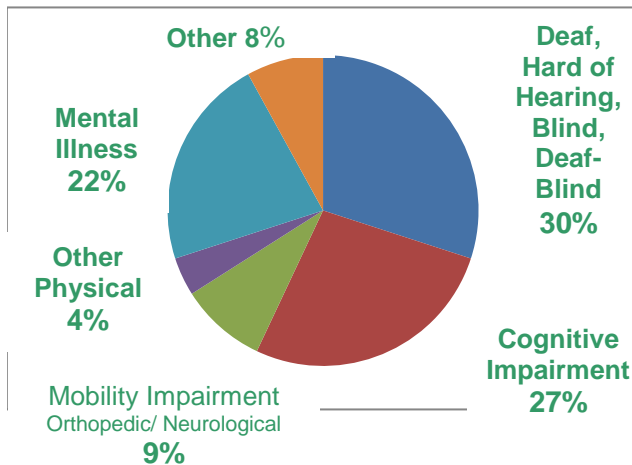
Types of Disabilities

Mental Health	39%
Learning Disabilities	16%
Mental Retardation	9%
Hard of Hearing	9%
Blind or Visual Impairment	9%
Substance abuse	3%
Deafness	3 %
Orthopedic	10%

NH Vocational Rehabilitation FY 2014 in Review October 1, 2013 – September 30, 2014

Types of Disabilities

*...for Federal Fiscal Year 2014
Types of disabilities of customers
successfully employed*



No one should be deprived of an opportunity to recognize and realize his/her talents and potentialities because of a disability.

Average Earnings

*.. for Federal Fiscal Year 2014,
the Average annual earnings of
customers before and after
rehabilitation.*

**Before
\$9,204**



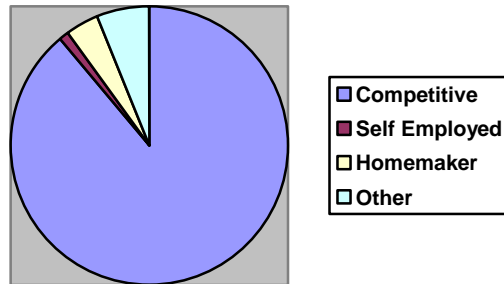
**After
\$20,072**



NH Vocational Rehabilitation FY 2014 in Review October 1, 2013 – September 30, 2014

Types of Jobs.....

*During Federal Fiscal Year 2014,
1,049 clients gained employment.*



Sources of Revenue

During Federal Fiscal Year 2014, NHVR received....

Federal Funds	\$11,342,382.00
State Funds	\$3,069,249.00
Program Income	\$1,399,552.00
Total	\$15,811,183.00

NH State Rehabilitation Council (SRC)

Annual Customer Satisfaction Survey

The annual assessment of customer satisfaction was completed by RKM Research and Communications, Inc. on behalf of the Agency and the SRC.

A total of 440 surveys were completed as part of this endeavor.

The average American Customer Satisfaction Index Score (ACSI) among all VR customers surveyed was 78.

Results were provided by RKM Research and Communications to the SRC with opportunity for question and comment.

No recommendations from the Council were made as a result of this opportunity.

NH State Rehabilitation Council (SRC)

The SRC Continues to develop linkages and forge productive relationships with a number of Councils and Boards, including:

- Deaf and Hard of Hearing Advisory Committee
- Services for Blind and Visually Impaired Advisory Committee
- Governor's Commission on Disabilities (GCD)
- Granite State Independent Living
- Statewide Independent Living Council (SILC)
- Client Assistance Program
- Parent Information Center
- Bureau of Developmental Services, Dept. of Health and Human Services

NH State Rehabilitation Council (SRC)

Kristina graduated from the START program (sector-based training in the hospitality industry). This is collaboration between Vocational Rehabilitation, Great Bay Community College and the area agency system in NH. She was so articulate and thankful for the individualized approach the program took to help her feel successful. This story is a great example of the individualized services that VR provides through its community partnerships. NH VR is proud of how this program has worked for Kristina and others like her to find a career path through individualized rehabilitation services.

NH State Rehabilitation Council (SRC)

Throughout the year and as part of the State Planning Process the SRC provides advice and recommendations to the Agency in order to improve services. This year the recommendations provided to the Agency are listed below along with the Agency's responses.

Comment: It was recommended that VR should continue efforts to develop employers willing to work with/ hire persons with disability.

Response: The Agency agrees with the importance of developing and maintaining relationships with employers and businesses in the state and will continue to support strategies and activities with this objective.

Comment: It was noted that there are a number of comments that were received related to computer/technology needs including access to technology and training. It was noted that the Agency should keep this increasing need in mind when working with customers.

Response: There has been an increase in hiring and placement activities and practices that include technology, computer knowledge and the internet, including online job applications; applications at kiosks, and online job postings. The Agency recognizes that it is important for customers to be aware of these practices and to, when appropriate include computer skills development and other technology awareness and training in planning and service provision.

Comment: Several Council members reinforced transportation as an area of need for people with disabilities seeking work in the state.

Comment: One Council member suggested that the Agency explore online learning as a potential option for transportation challenged individuals to complete training requirements.

Response: The Agency agrees that options and opportunities including online learning should be explored with customers as part of informed choice when developing and participating in their plan for employment.

NH State Rehabilitation Council

Comment: One Council member cautioned the Agency that while computer work may be an option that it not just be a default (or the only option) for individuals who find transportation challenges. Encouraged to be person specific and recognize that the social element of work may be an important element that is not met when working at home electronically.

Response: The Agency concurs and continually seeks to provide individualized services based on the customers strengths, resources, priorities, concerns, abilities, capabilities, interests and informed choice.

Comment: One area of need was identified as a need for training on how to be a good employee – help person to get the job may include additional information in areas of soft skills – personal hygiene, attendance, punctuality, etc.

Response: The Agency agrees and seeks to include that where appropriate in the planning and service provision with individual customers.

Comment: One Council member noted that overall the comments received during the public comment period appear to be more positive than in some past years

Comment: One Council member noted that the VR Counselor is key to the rehabilitation process and good training is necessary so that they can continue to do a good job.

Response: The Agency concurs and continues to support the professional development of our staff.

Comment: It was noted that several commenters around the state mentioned concerns around the Job Search / Job Development service. They encouraged the Agency to look at whether there is a process for assuring that there is a check in and evaluation as to whether the goal is realistic, and that it is adjusted as necessary particularly for those individuals who are not able to find employment after a period of time.

Response: The Agency will refer this comment to the CRP workgroup.

NH State Rehabilitation Council

Comment: Transition was identified as an important area to continue to support.

Response: The Agency agrees and continues to include transition as a priority area for the Agency.

Comment: Several Council members noted that experience while in school was an important component for success for transition students (e.g., work experience, summer job). One Council member further noted that there is an identified link between paid work in school and later employment success and made the recommendation that the Agency look at interim benchmarks that capture opportunities for paid work experiences for transition aged youth and not just the end employment outcome.

Response: The Agency agrees that opportunities for transition aged students to be successful in work experiences are an important component to consider. This recommendation will be shared with the Transition Coordinator and the Leadership Team for further consideration.

Comment: One Council member recommended that the Council consider a self-evaluation to include questions regarding: full understanding of role, am I as a member making a meaningful contribution, do I have an adequate understanding of my role and the information that I am provided; what are the needs and are they being filled.

Comments received on the Comprehensive Statewide Needs Assessment (CSNA)

Comment: Transition should be included in the next round of the statewide needs assessment as additional information about this population could be helpful in providing quality services to New Hampshire youth who are transitioning from school to work or college.

Response: The Agency agrees and will be including Transition as a target population in the 2014 – 2016 CSNA.

NH State Rehabilitation Council

Comment: The statistics are interesting in the amount of growth or lack of it in different industries, and those projected to increase in needs. It seems that the highest projected increases in jobs are those in the lowest paid areas. Yet they project the cost of things like housing etc., to increase. It might be interesting to think about what this could mean for training folks to take the lower wage jobs and whether they will be able to support themselves if we put them into those jobs. I wonder if the trend should be in the technical or self-employment areas where persons can get higher valued skills.

Response: This is an important consideration for our customers as they develop their plans for employment. Whether there is employment in their chosen goal area and if the wages will be sufficient to support themselves once they are employed. This comment will be shared with the Corporate Relations staff and the Training Officer to investigate the possibility of labor market training for counselors.

Comment: regarding page 47 – information from schools. “The schools were split on whether the communication was sufficient, with 51.6% saying yes, and 48.4% saying no.” Also the other survey results are inconsistent. It would be interesting to learn if the negative comments were coming from the same schools and what the cause is of that. Is that the same district that doesn’t want students referred? What can we do to make improvements in that and the communication?

Response: This may be an area to investigate further with the 2014 – 2016 CSNA period, particularly as Transition has been identified as a target area for that assessment.

NH State Rehabilitation Council

Comment: The responses of what was most helpful showed the biggest part of helpfulness was the services provided by the counselor and VR. If that is what was most helpful, that is where we should put our money and resources. (general survey responses)

Response: The Agency agrees about the importance of the Counselor and the counseling relationship in the rehabilitation process and seeks ways for continuing professional development and support for our Counselors and other staff.

Comment: One Council member expressed concern about caseload size.

Agency Response: The Agency regularly reviews staffing patterns and caseload size to determine coverage needs. This information is also shared with the SRC's Policy Committee and with the Council on a regular basis. The Agency believes that, at this time, the current staffing is adequate to meet the needs of the Agency's customers. The Agency will continue to monitor staffing patterns, caseload size and movement of cases through the vocational rehabilitation process.

NH State Rehabilitation Council (SRC)

Contact Us

Call: 603-271-1428

Fax: 603-271-7095

Write:

Chair, State Rehabilitation Council
NH Vocational Rehabilitation
21 South Fruit Street, Suite 20
Concord, NH 03301

Website:

<http://education.nh.gov/career/vocational/advisory.htm>

Attend a Meeting or Public Forum:

The State Rehabilitation Council meeting and Public Forums are open to the public. SRC meetings are generally held in October, January, March and June. Public forums are generally held in February or March. The meeting locations, dates and times are posted on the SRC webpage.

<http://education.nh.gov/career/vocational/advisory.htm>

Apply for Membership:

If you are interested in becoming a member of the SRC, you can contact Elizabeth Howlett, SRC Liaison at 603 - 271-1428.